

***Revisions per 5/16/17 School Committee meeting**

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, Vice-Chair; Dr. Lori McEwen; Mr. Michael Fain; Dr. Yan Sun; Mr. Matt Plain; and Mr. Jeff Dronzek. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; and Attorney Matthew Oliverio were also in attendance.

7:00 P.M. Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. Public Comments

Mr. Jason Liesching, parent, addressed the Committee and said he would like to speak on

two topics. He stated that there were a lot of theories about last year's bus decisions and he felt that an objective view might be helpful to the public because of all the theories going around. Ms. Mark responded that typically the Committee may not engage in a conversation around a public comment topic. She said that it is possible that some of his questions may be addressed during the Transportation Subcommittee's report. Mr. Liesching said five years ago a Strategic Committee was formed and he asked about the outputs of that Committee. Ms. Mark responded that the Strategic Plan is posted on the East Greenwich website. She said that It had been formulated through a community process.

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. Budget Workshop for March 28, 2017

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. McEwen, the Committee voted

7-0 to approve the minutes.

b. Executive for March 28, 2017

Ms. Mark *suggested that a motion be made to table the executive minutes. On a motion by

Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 7-0 to postpone

approval of executive minutes until the next meeting. Ms. Mark noted that the reason for the

postponement was an adjustment to the minutes that could not be discussed in open

session.

c. Regular for April 4, 2017

Ms. Mark stated that there was an issue with the minutes that needed to be resolved that

evening. She explained that the School Committee's motion of approval was on the *town

appropriation and should have been the *total appropriation. She said that Attorney

Oliverio was present to make certain that we do it correctly. Attorney Oliverio suggested

that to clarify it, the Committee should make a motion to amend the minutes to reflect the

total appropriation of \$39,646,476 with the ask from the town of \$35,379,970. Mr. Plain

asked whether the actual language of the minutes would be changed or a footnote added.

Attorney Oliverio responded that a footnote would be added to amend the minutes to

reflect the total appropriation and proper town appropriation of that four percent and that

should correct the record. On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Sun,

the Committee voted 7-0 to postpone approval in order to add a footnote to amend the

minutes to reflect the total appropriation of \$39,646,476 with the ask from the town of

\$35,379,970, which will correct the record and present the

minutes at the next School

Committee meeting for approval.

V. Superintendent's Report

a. PARCC update - Dr. Mercurio stated so far so good. He said students met briefly with

the Administrative Council for a quick update. He explained that the state will be offering an

extended time of up to 50 percent of the testing block for non IEP and 504 students. He

said that the testing window that includes makeup is May 26. He stated that NECAP

Science also takes place during the same window. He noted that there will be no paper

testing this year except for certain accommodations, and he expressed gratitude to the

technology staff, principals, support staff, and teachers for all their hard work. Ms. Mark

questioned whether this would be the last year for PARCC. Dr. Mercurio responded that it

will be the last year for PARCC testing and that we will enter a partnership with

Massachusetts/MCAS, which was in the Commissioner's Press Release. He stated that he

has lots of questions with joining the consortium with Massachusetts and what it will mean.

He said that we were used to a multi-state consortium and were

able to meet with other

practitioners. He added that he has concerns with joining the Massachusetts partnership as

they have been established for a long time, and he is uncertain how much they will be willing

to engage our practitioners with working on testing preparation and professional

development. He stated that he will be looking with caution that we are properly prepared

and protocol is established.

b. Survey Works

Dr. Mercurio stated that, that window has closed but through his field memo there is a

link to the state's website that contains a lot of information. He added that RIDE will

release more information later this spring and he will certainly post it.

VI. Action Items

a. Retirement-Phyllis Humphrey, Librarian/Media Specialist, Cole

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Dronzek, the Committee

voted 7-0 to accept the retirement. Dr. Mercurio noted that Mrs. Humphrey will be

recognized at the end of the year.

b. Resignation-Darrin Bouley, Fiscal Clerk, Central Office

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Plain,

the Committee voted

7-0 to accept the resignation. Dr. Mercurio stated that a candidate will be brought

forward next Tuesday.

c. Colliers International Proposals

d. Saccoccio & Associates Proposals

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Dronzek, the Committee

voted 7-0 to accept the Colliers and Saccoccio proposals. Dr. Mercurio noted that these

proposals came before the Committee after they were vetted by the Building Committee

and moved forward as a progression of the stage two submission to RIDE.

VII. Advisory/Subcommittee Updates

a. Personnel Committee

Dr. Lori McEwen stated that at the April 6 meeting those present were Ms. Mark, Mrs.

Winters, Mrs. Wilcox, and Mrs. DiMeglio. She explained that Dr. Mercurio was not able to

be at that meeting, so much of what was discussed will not be able to be passed to the

Policy Committee until she meets with him. She said that the Committee is rolling along

with personnel policies -Interview Process for Procedure and Selection of

Principals and other Administrators, Evaluation of Administrators, Termination and

Suspension of Certified Personnel, Control and Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens,

Dress Code, and Code of Conduct Code of Professional Responsibilities. She noted

that many of the policies have been reviewed by Attorney Oliverio and as soon as she

meets with Dr. Mercurio and gets an affirmative, they will be forwarded to the Policy

Committee. She said that the employment manual was reviewed and thanked Mrs.

DiMeglio and the rest of the team for all their hard work. Dr. McEwen stated that at the

next meeting on May 4, the Superintendent's Evaluation Process will be reviewed and

forwarded to Mr. Plain of the Policy Committee. Mr. Plain suggested that perhaps the

Policy Committee meeting can take place immediately following the Personnel Committee

on the same day, same location, and the Superintendent's Evaluation Process be

submitted to the Policy Committee then.

b. Transportation Subcommittee

Mr. Dronzek stated that the goal of the last couple of meetings was to try to get a

proposal in place to present to the School Committee as to what may work with times,

schedules, and ideas that make sense around busing. He noted that at their April 25

meeting a good portion of time was spent on routes and options. Mr. Dronzek stated that

the Transportation Subcommittee will meet again on Thursday, April 27 to finalize discussing

routes and bus loads and may have a proposal for the May 2 meeting or next. He said that

the focus has been on two tiers vs. three tiers. He explained that the Subcommittee has

been reviewing the walking distance enforcement already in the policy. He said that the

enrollment issue that has been in all discussions also plays a role in busing. Mr. Dronzek

stated that Tara Wood, member of the Policy Committee, attended Thursday's meeting and

ran through some of the policies. Mr. Jason Liesching, parent, stated that busses stop at so

many doors and wait for students to come out. He said that if the busses had designated

areas of picking students up there would be significant savings. Mr. Dronzek responded

that clustering stops is one of the Subcommittee's goals. Mrs. Mong, resident and employee,

stated that she witnesses some busses arriving at the high school with very few kids

while others are full. She questioned whether adding more kids to a bus was an option.

Mr. Dronzek responded that bus capacity is set when planning, and is required to provide a

bus for all students within the perimeters of riding. He said that high school riding issues

are more prevalent and not as much an issue at the other schools.

Mr. Dronzek mentioned

that there are legal requirements, but parents can officially opt out and by doing so we can

plan better. Mrs. Mong stated that it can be difficult in getting parent information back, so is

there a plan to get the feedback from parents opting out of busses.

Mr. Dronzek responded

that the plan is to have an easy to follow worksheet with other transportation items in

addition to the opt out option and be persistent for returns. Mrs. Moss, parent, questioned

whether there was any chance of going back to 2 tiers. Mr. Dronzek said that he was very

comfortable saying that we will not see two tiers. Mr. Dronzek told Mr. Liesching to contact

him regarding his earlier questions.

c. Building Committee

Mr. Fain stated that the Committee met on April 13. He explained that RIDE is at stage two

process right now with additional information requested and submitted. Mr. Fain said that

the May 9 meeting is for the actual RIDE approval. He explained that in the meantime, work

will be started on actual plans that include Hanaford's addition for security purposes and

roof and changes in the art space and special education space at the high school, which

the Committee went over at the meeting. He stated that long-term plans will be

discussed at future meetings particularly in light of enrollment projections and what our

space requirements are. He added that right now based on the state, we are at

106 percent of utilization so we are in a tight spot. Mrs. Winters stated that the basis

the state uses is based on 80 percent. Mr. Fain said that across the schools there is no

space. Dr. Mercurio stated that he would be attending the May 9 meeting.

d. Mental Health Subcommittee

Ms. Mark announced that the last meeting was held on April 10. We will be focused on two

things from now until the end of the year, Mental Health

Awareness and Mental Health

Curriculum. She stated that there will be a lot of activities and events that will be planned for

next May's Mental Health Awareness Month and will get all related mental health topics out

on the district and school list serves. Ms. Mark said that Dr. Ben Johnson has agreed to

conduct two community forums at Cole and Meadowbrook, as he did last year. She added

that Cole and Meadowbrook agreed to host these community forums again this year,

and we are still in the process of scheduling those. Ms. Mark said that more information will

be coming out this Friday or next. She stated that the Mental Health Curriculum was also

discussed and explained that pending legislation requires us to ramp up our Health

Curriculum to address a variety of mental health topics. She noted that the Mental Health

Subcommittee has been in conversation with Mr. Downey, Chair for PE/Health grades 6-12.

She explained that the Subcommittee would like to play a supporting role in helping to do

some research around some evidence-based curriculum. Ms. Mark stated that there will be

one more Mental Health Subcommittee meeting this year and we

have a guest speaker,

Vanessa Weiner, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Resilience. She said that

Ms. Weiner has done a lot of work in professional development and is looking forward to

speaking with her to look at potential professional development opportunities to embed

mindfulness into school culture. Ms. Mark answered Dr. McEwen's question on the Mental

Health Curriculum with regard to her question about social emotional learnings. She stated

that the focus is really around reducing stigma and helping to educate students on wellness

around mental health and not on social emotional learning.

VIII. Discussion

a. FY 2018 Budget

Ms. Mark stated that according to town charter we needed to pass our budget by April 15,

which was done. She briefly explained the budget process-the town manager takes in that

budget, works with his budget owner to develop a municipal budget, and will put forward a

comprehensive budget to the town. She said there will be a public presentation and hearing

both on municipal and the school side at the May 15 town meeting. She stated that

approval of the town-wide budget will be by early June. Mr. Plain commented on the

intramural program at the middle school and that we must meet our obligations under the

BEP to get intramurals back in. Ms. Mark explained that when the budget and total number

is approved, we still reserve the ability to shift things around and anything that needs to be

revisited we will have the opportunity to do so. Mr. Stuart Hallagan, parent, stated that when

the budget was approved with an additional \$25,000.00 being cut from athletics, it was

done without any detail. He asked for the details on what will be cut. Mr. Dronzek said it will

be across the board and that Mr. Cobain will work on that. He stated that he is fairly

confident that we will get back a good portion of that. He said that no sport will be cut. Mr.

Hallagan also asked about advertising. Mr. Dronzek said that we will be moving forward on

that and quickly. Dr. McEwen explained that she wanted to make a point of clarity regarding

the \$25,000.00 proposed cut to get us to the number that we are looking at. She said that

she was not certain that we can say or did say that it had to be evenly distributed or that was

the intent behind it. She emphasized that if we do not get the four percent back, it will be

back to the drawing board looking at cuts. She said that she does not want to give the

impression that no sport will be cut. She pointed out that Dr. Mercurio explained that if we

fundraise to make up additional moneies in athletics, the Interscholastic League must be

informed that we are running a sport and that the sport cost a certain amount. He said that

if we end up funding less than that and we are not positive the money can be raised, we are

Setting ourselves up for a precarious situation. Mr. Dronzek said that he feels confident that

Mr. Cobain will be able to work it through without cutting anything specific. Mr. Liesching

stated that there was a lot of confusion on what decisions were being made or not being

made and it was misleading to the community. He said that it was difficult to understand

what you were saying about getting four percent from the town and there will be no school

sports cut but would be spread across the board by Mr. Cobain. He asked Dr. Mercurio

whether there is an obligation to the state Interscholastic League regarding what sports we

are committing to, and if so, does that unfairly penalize the sports that are in the back-half

of the season year. Dr. Mercurio responded that we must communicate with the

Interscholastic League and commit with the appropriate funding behind it. Mr. Liesching

asked whether all four fall sports are committed. Dr. Mercurio responded that all four are

committed with the incorporated four percent ask because they are scheduled six months in

advance. Mr. Hallagan stated that with the budget not being approved until early June, that

pushes the fall sports right up to the limit of six months and you have already committed.

Ms. Mark said that it is possible to withdraw but not add at that point. Mr. Hallagan asked

whether, if needed, would major fundraising be an option. Ms. Mark responded that

community conversation would need to happen before a decision was made.

IX. School Committee Concerns/Important Matters Pending

There were no Committee Concerns/Important Matters Pending

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. McEwen,

the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:06 P.M.

Ms. Mark made a motion to resume the executive session. On a motion by Dr. McEwen, which was seconded by Mr. Dronzek, the Committee voted 7-0 to resume the executive session at 8:06 P.M.

Margaret M. Ucci

Secretary